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A SERMON

Preach'd at the

ORDINATION

OF

Mr. *Thomas Fisher*,

AT

CASTLE-HEDINGHAM,

In the County of

ESSEX,

On *JUNE* 23, 1713.

By *SAMUEL BURY*, V. D. M.

To which is Annexed, Mr. *Fisher*'s Confession of Faith, and Mr. *Cook*'s Exhortation.

Publish'd at the Request of the Ministers, and People that heard it.

De Min. Instituend.

Sint Compositi, ad Mores, Probati, ad Sanctimoniam, Parati, ad Obedientiam, Subjecti, ad Disciplinam, Catholici, ad Fidem, Fideles, ad Dispensationem, Concordes, ad Pacem.

A. Houghton.

London: Printed for *Nath. Cliff*, and *Dan. Jackson* at the *Bible* and *Three Crowns* in *Cheapside* near *Mercers-Chappel*, 1713. Price Six Pence.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

ORDINATION

OF

Mr. *Thomas Fiſher.*

I THESS. II. iv.

But as we were allowed of God to be put in Truſt with the Goſpel, even ſo we ſpeak, not as pleaſing Men, but God who trieth our Heart.

THE great *Work* of the *Miniſtry*, in all the ſeveral Parts and Branches of it, is ſo emphatically ſacred and ſolemn in it ſelf, that it cannot but poſſeſs the Hearts of *all* Men (who have ever entertain'd any juſt Apprehenſions of it) with a very Religious Reverence and Awe; but much more *theirs*, who have a more immediate and neceſſary Concern in it.

To be *Intruſted* by God with the Everlaſting Goſpel, and with the Eternal Concerns of the *Souls* of Men, and with the *Succeſſion* of Goſpel *Officers*, to whom ſhall be committed this ſacred Truſt; Is certainly of all other the moſt tremendous Charge, that Infinite Majeſty could ever put into the Hands of Mortal Men.

It may therefore be well ſuppoſed, that it is with much *Fear* and *Trembling*, that we the unworthy Miniſters of Jeſus Chriſt are undertaking the awful Service of this Day; and ſtanding in the Place of our bleſſed Lord and Maſter, to ſet apart, and in his Name to Authorize one from among our ſelves to be and act as an Officer in the Goſpel, to miniſter in all Things ſacred to the People, and to commit to him the Charge of the Souls of Men, and the whole Truſt of all Goſpel Treaſures.

But the Greatneſs of our preſent Work muſt not ſeem to deter us from the Undertaking of it, ſince this alſo is a part of our ſolemn Truſt, in which we muſt be found faithful. And therefore *as we are allow'd of God to be put in Truſt with the Goſpel, even ſo we ſpeak, not as pleaſing Men, but God who trieth our Heart.*

I would not detain you with any unneceſſary *Introduction* to theſe Words, and therefore ſhall ſumm up the *Context* very briefly thus,

The Apoſtle in the Three foregoing Verſes of this Chapter, being neceſſitated by the Calumnies of Men, gives us an Account, firſt of his own Sincerity, and then of the comfortable Succeſs of his Miniſtry amongſt the *Theſſalonians*; from whence, together with our own common Experience, we might obſerve, *That it is but ſeldom that great Succeſs does not accompany great Sincerity.*

You your ſelves, Brethren, know, ſaith he, *v. 1. That our Entrance in unto you was not in vain.* He certainly ſpeaks by a *Meioſis*, and his meaning is, you know it was greatly profitable to Multitudes of you.

We

We read of an ancient Promiſe of God, *Iſa.* 55. 11. *The Word that goeth forth out of my Mouth, ſhall not return unto me void, but ſhall proſper in the Thing whereto I ſend it.* And this Promiſe made to the Prophet, is here made good to the Apoſtle, in the abundant Succeſs and Efficacy of his Miniſtry.

Ver. 3. *Our Exhortation*, ſays he, *and Preaching to you, was not of Deceit, nor of Uncleanneſs, nor in Guile*; Words, ſays *Piſcator*, that ſignifie in Effect but one and the ſame Thing, *q. d.* We preach to you no inſnaring Doctrines; we never impoſed upon you any Philoſophical Fallacies; we never ſeduced you into Error; or ſuited our Doctrines to the corrupt Opinions, or laſcivious Practices of any Men: But preach'd to you in the Sincerity of our Hearts, and with a ſingle Eye at the Glory of God, and without the leaſt regard to any baſe and ſiniſter Ends whatſoever. *As we were allow'd of God, to be put in Truſt with the Goſpel, even ſo we ſpeak, not as pleaſing Men, but God who trieth our Heart.*

In theſe Words it muſt be obvious for every one to obſerve theſe Three Things.

1. *A very honourable Truſt committed*, and this was the *Goſpel*: That ſacred Repoſitory of all Divine and Saving Truths: The Standard of Faith: The Directory of Worſhip and Diſcipline: And the *Norma* or Rule of Life and Practice.

2. *The Perſons to whom this Truſt was committed.* They were firſt the *Apoſtles* and *extraordinary Officers* of Chriſt's Church, and after them, the ſucceeding *Miniſters* of the Goſpel to the World's end. Theſe are appointed by God as his Truſtees in the Evangelical Diſpenſation.

3. *The Integrity of theſe Perſons in the diſcharge of this their Truſt.* They had a faithful regard to a right Improvement of this manifold Grace of God committed to them; and therefore they did not go about to gratifie the Humours of Men in the management of their Truſt, but conſtantly to approve their Hearts

to God, whose Ministers they were, and to whom they knew themselves at last accountable.

The Words of my Text are easily Converted into this *Proposition.*

Doct. *That such as are allow'd by God to be put in Trust with the Gospel of Christ, will faithfully endeavour the pleasing of God, and not of Men, in the constant and full Discharge of their Ministerial Trust.*

In speaking to this Doctrine, it will be necessary for me to answer these Four Enquiries.

I. *What is it for Persons to be allow'd by God, to be the Ministers of Christ?*

II. *What is it for such Persons to be intrusted with the Gospel?*

III. *When may Ministers be said to be Men-pleasers in the Management of that Trust?*

IV. *When they may be said to approve themselves to an Heart-searching God in the discharge of it?* Of each of these in their Order.

First General. *What is it for Persons to be allow'd of God, to be the Ministers of Jesus Christ?*

The Apostles speak of themselves as Persons *allow'd of God*, for this. The *Original* Word δεδοκιμάσμεθα, signifies to be *proved*, and *approved* by God; and so the *Arabick*, the *Syriack*, and the *Ethiopick* Versions render it.

But what may we suppose to be contained in this Phrase? Allow'd of God, &c. I Answer, It contains in it these Three Things. 1. That they are Persons *called* to the Ministry. 2. *Separated* to it. And, 3. *Invested* in it.

1. *Such as are allow'd of God to be the Ministers of Christ, are Persons called to the Ministry.* There is none brought into this Office or Work by God without

out a Call, *Heb.* 5. 4. *No Man taketh to himself this Honour, but he that is called of God, as was* Aaron. None *taketh* it, *i. e. de jure, ought* to take it. *Verbs* active, saith *Glassius*, signify in Scripture, not only what *is* done, but what *ought* to be done.

There are many, it's true, *invade* the Office, and thrust themselves into it, they are αὐτόκλητοι, *Self-called*, but God will not allow such to be real Ministers, but brands them as Objects of his great Displeasure, *Jer.* 23. 21. *I have not sent them*, but yet *they ran*; *I have not spoken unto them, but yet they prophesied*: And what follows? v. 32. *I am against them*, saith the Lord, *and they shall not profit the People to whom they go.* Nay he threatens that for this their *Wickedness*, as he calls it, *Chap.* 14. 14, 15, 16. both they and the People to whom they preach'd *should all perish*, *Ch.* 27. 15.

Very memorable was God's Judgment upon *Uzziah* the King, when he invaded the Office of the Priests, to burn Incense to the Lord, which belonged only to such as were called to the sacerdotal Office: It is said, *The Leprosy presently arose in his Forehead, and they thrust him out of the Temple of God, and he was a Leper to the Day of his Death*, 2 *Chron.* 26. 16, *ad* 23. When *Uzzah* did but *touch* the *Ark* of *the Lord* with a good Intention to keep it from falling, yet because he had no Call from God for that Service, he *was smitten with Death*, 2 *Sam.* 6. 6, 7.

It is easy to shew the *Practice* of *the Church in all Scripture Ages*, and how all its Ministers were duly called to their Office. We read of *Aaron*'s Call and his *Sons* to their Ministry, *Exod.* 28. 1. And of the Call of the *Levites*, *Num.* 1. 50. And of the Call of the *Prophets*, particularly of *Samuel*'s Call, 1 *Sam.* 3. 4, 6, 8. And of *Isaiah*'s, *Chap.* 6. 8, 9 And of *Jeremiah*'s, *Chap.* 1. 4, 5. The like may be said of others. Yea our blessed *Lord* himself was called to his Work before he would undertake it, *Isaiah* 42. 6. *Heb.* 5. 5. And so were all the *Apostles*, *Mat.* 10. 1, 5, 7. *Mar.* 3. 13, 14. *Luke* 9. 1, 2. It is particularly

larly ſaid of *Paul*, he was called of God, *Rom.* 1. 1. And ſo of *Stephanus*, 1 *Cor.* 1. 1. And of *Archippus*, *Col.* 4. 17. And of all other ordinary Paſtors and Teachers, *Eph.* 4. 11. 1 *Cor.* 12. 28.

And it would be no difficult Task to ſhew you, that this has been the general Practice of the Church *from the Primitive Ages of Chriſtianity* down to our own Days: But this being too *long* a Work for a *little* Time, I muſt at preſent diſmiſs it.

If you ask me, *What manner of Call it is, they muſt have to this Work, who are allowed of God to be the Miniſters of Chriſt?* I anſwer in *general*;

It *muſt be a Call from God*, *Acts* 13. 2. Separate me *Barnabas* and *Saul* for the Work whereunto *I have called* them.

But *particularly*, This Call of God is both *internal* and *external*.

1. *This Call is internal*; And the internal Call of God to the Work and Office of the Miniſtry, is his *fitting* them for the Work, and his making them *willing* and deſirous to undertake it.

All that are called by God to the Work of the Miniſtry are *fitted* for it. If the Spirit of God prepared *Bezaleel* and *Aholiab* for the *material* Work of the *Tabernacle*, before he employ'd them in it: How much more will he prepare his Miniſters for the *Spiritual* Work of it?

'Tis true, there are *Degrees* to be allow'd, and a great *Difference* of Degrees in Mens Fitneſs for this Work: But all that are called of God, muſt in ſome competent Meaſure be fitted for what they are called to. The Apoſtle took this as a Part of his Call, 1 *Tim.* 1. 12. I thank *Jeſus Chriſt*, who hath *enabled* me, putting me into the Miniſtry. So 2 *Cor.* 3. 6. who hath made us *able* Miniſters of the new Teſtament.

Thoſe whom God calls, are made truly *ſerious* in their own Spirits: *zealous* for his Glory: *ſolicitous* for the Intereſt of Souls: and *exemplary* in their Lives. They are *apt* to teach, and ſuch as can ſpeak *feelingly* of

of the *Ways* of God, the *Devices* of *Satan*, the *Deceitfulneſs* of Sin, the *Energy* of Grace, and the *Conſolations* of the Spirit.

God has endow'd them with *Abilities* to ſearch into the great Truths and Myſteries of Religion. He has bleſs'd their Studies with ſuch ſubſtantial Acquirements of Learning, as to be able in ſome Meaſure to underſtand the Scripture, and expound it, and to ſpeak a Word in Seaſon both to Saints and Sinners, to ſhew unto Man his Uprightneſs, and alſo to ſilence and convince Gainſayers.

It is an Obſervation of a very pious *Author*, That God has been pleaſed to interſperſe ſomething of almoſt all Kinds of other Learning beſides divine, in the Holy Scripture: As of *Aſtronomy* and other Parts of *Phyſicks*, in what is reported of the Situation and Motion of the Heavenly Bodies, of Animals, Vegetables, Meteors, Minerals, Mettals, and precious Stones. Of *Ethicks* and *Politicks* in the Writings of *Solomon*, particularly in the Books of *Proverbs* and *Eccleſiaſtes*. Of *Geography*, in the ſeveral Countries, Regions, Seas, and Rivers, mentioned both in the old Teſtament and in the new. Of *Mathematicks* and *Architecture*, in the Structure of *Noah's Ark*, and of *Solomon*'s and *Ezekiel*'s Temple. Of *Logick*, in the ſtrong Reaſonings, methodical Compoſures, accurate Diviſions, and perfect Definitions of Things by the Prophets and Apoſtles. Of *Rhetorick*, in the many *Tropes* and *Figures*, and powerful Elegancies uſed by the inſpired Writers. Of *Languages*, in the Writing of the old Teſtament in *Hebrew* and *Chaldee*, and of the new in *Greek*. As alſo of *Exotick* and *Profane Hiſtory*, *Antiquity*, *Poetry*, *&c.* in the ſeveral Quotations of *Menander*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 33. Of *Aratus*, *Acts* 17. 28. And of *Epimenides*, *Tit.* 1. 12. And all this to intimate to us the Neceſſity of human Learning, and what Abundance of Knowledge is requiſite for the right Underſtanding and dividing the Word of Truth. If *Maximus Tyrius* could ſay of a *Philoſo-*

pher,

pher, That becauſe he is to ſpeak to all Subjects, he muſt therefore be made up of all Knowledge and Learning. And if *Tully* required the ſame in every Orator, how much more might it reaſonably be expected in every Divine? But not to digreſs from the Matter in hand.

God does not only *fit* ſuch for the Work of the Miniſtry whom he *calls* to it, but he alſo makes them ſincerely *willing* and *deſirous* to undertake it. *Whom ſhall I ſend? here am I, ſend me, Iſa. 6.* 8. When God called *Samuel*, *Speak Lord*, ſays he, *for thy Servant heareth*, 1 *Sam.* 3. 10. They are not only *content* and ſatisfied with the Work and Office of the Miniſtry, but they are *deſirous* of it, 1 *Tim.* 3. 1. And this not out of Ambition, or Covetouſneſs, or for any ſecular Advantages by it, but upon Grounds truly Chriſtian and Spiritual. 'Tis therefore a very neceſſary and trying Queſtion that is asked in the Office of Ordination, according to the *Church of England*, *Do you truſt that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghoſt to take upon you this Office and Miniſtry to ſerve God, for the promoting of his Glory, and for the edifying his People?* And it is ſurely a Thing to be conſidered by all that are deſigning for the Miniſtry, whether they are really deſirous of it: That is after a due Deliberation, and a ſerious Debate with themſelves, concerning the Duties, the Difficulties, and the Dangers of the Calling.

From what has been ſaid, it will follow, that if Men are willing, and yet not fit: or if they are fit, and yet not willing, they have not this *inward* Call of God to the Miniſtry; much leſs when they are neither fit nor willing, but merely thruſt upon it, either by corrupt Aims of their own, or the Importunity of carnal Friends or Relatives.

2. *This Call is external.* An inward Call is neceſſary, but it is not enough, there muſt be an outward Call too.

I don't mean any outward *immediate* Call, or a Call in any extraordinary Manner, nor is there any Ground in Scripture to expect any ſuch, ſince all extraordinary Officers, ſuch as Apoſtles, Evangeliſts, and Prophets are long ſince ceaſed. Whenever there were any ſuch Calls, they were generally attended with the Gifts of Miracles, of Tongues, of Healing, or of Prophecy.

But the External Call into the Work and Office of the Miniſtry is now *mediate*, and is by ſuch Perſons whom God has deputed it unto in the Goſpel, and are capable Judges of the Qualifications of ſuch who devote themſelves and their Labours to that Service.

It does not appear, That the Suffrage of the People, or a Call only from the People, can make a Miniſter. 'Tis true, this may make a Man *their* Miniſter, but not *a* Miniſter: That is, it may *determine* his Miniſtry to them, but not *conſtitute* him a Goſpel Miniſter; there muſt be a more ſolemn inveſting Act of Men in Office, before he can be a rightful Miniſter; and this may be done without the Suffrage or Call of the People. But this leads me to the ſecond Thing, contained in this Phraſe, of being *allowed* by God to be the Miniſters of Chriſt. They are not only *called* to the Miniſtry; but,

2. *Such as are allow'd of God to be the Miniſters of Chriſt, are ſeparated to the Work and Office of the Miniſtry.* Acts 13. 2. *Separate me* Barnabas *and* Saul *for the Work whereunto I have called them.* Tho' the Spirit of God had choſen them, yet the *Elders* of *Antioch* were to ſeparate them for the Work of the Miniſtry.

Now this *Separation* ſeems to denote two Things.

1. *A Separation from other Men.* A Perſon allow'd by God to be a Miniſter of Chriſt, is to be ſeparated from others. Not only from the *Multitude*, as the Apoſtles were when called by Chriſt, *Mark* 3. 13, 14. But alſo from the reſt of the *Church*, as *Matthias* was, *Acts* 1. 21, 23.

2. *A Separation from other Buſineſs.* A Perſon called by God to the Work and Office of the Miniſtry is to be wholly engaged in this Work, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. Meditate upon theſe Things, give thy ſelf *wholly* to them.

God himſelf enjoyn'd ſuch a Separation under the *Old Teſtament:* As of *Aaron* and his Sons, *Exod.* 28. 1. And of all the *Levites*, *Numb.* 8. 14. And ſuch a Separation has been obſerv'd under the New. 'Tis expreſly ſaid of *Paul*, that he was ſeparated to the Goſpel, *Rom.* 1. 1. And of *Matthias*, that he was ſeparated to be an Apoſtle, *Acts* 1. 21, 26. And they look'd upon themſelves ſo ſeparated, as to be taken off from all other Buſineſs, yea from taking care of the Alms of the Church, *Acts* 6. 2, 3, 4. *It is not reaſon that we ſhould leave the Word of God and ſerve Tables; but we will give our ſelves continually to Prayer, and to the Miniſtry of the Word.*

And ſuch is the very Nature of the Miniſtry, as to require ſuch a Separation as this. It is of it ſelf a *diſtinct Office and Calling.* The Apoſtle calls it an *Office*, 1 Tim. 3. 1. *If any Man deſires the Office of a Biſhop, he deſires a good Work.* The Scripture every where diſtinguiſhes the Work of Miniſters from the Work of the People: And gives ſpecial Charges to the one, that do not concern the other, *Heb.* 13. 7. *Remember them that have the rule over you, and ſpeak to you the Word of God.* V. 17. *Obey and ſubmit to them, as thoſe that watch for your Souls, and muſt give an Account. Take heed to your ſelves*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *to the Elders of* Miletus, *Acts* 20. 28. *And to all the Flock, over which the Holy Ghoſt hath made you Overſeers, to feed the Church of God*, &c. And therefore ſuch as are engaged in the Miniſtry, ought to be diſtinguiſhed and ſeparated from other Men and Buſineſs, that they might only attend their Calling.

And this was practiced even among the *Heathens.* They carefully ſeparated ſuch from all other Men and Buſineſs whom they imploy'd in ſacred Things, and

Acts

Acts of Divine Worſhip. Thus the *Magi* were ſeparated by the *Perſians*, the *Brachmanni* by the *Indians*; the *Druidæ*, by the *Gauls*. The *Pontifices*, *Augures*, and *Flamines* by the *Romans*. We read of ſuch in *Egypt*, Gen. 47. 22. In *Paleſtine*, 1 Sam. 6. 2. In *Lycaonia*, Acts 14. 13. But we need not go from the Practice of the true Church of God, which is ſufficiently clear in the ſeveral Ages of it.

3. *Such as are allowed of God to be Miniſters of Chriſt, are Authoritatively inveſted in their Miniſtry.* Not only *examined* as to their fitneſs for it: Nor only *approved* for their willingneſs, aptneſs, ability, and faithfulneſs in it: But alſo ſolemnly *Inaugurated*, *Inſtall'd*, and *Inveſted* in the Work and Office. And this is commonly called their *Ordination*. And done by Men in Office, or by Goſpel Miniſters. *Titus* was left at *Crete* to ordain Elders in every City, *Chap.* 1. 5. *Timothy* receiv'd his Orders from the *Presbytery*, 1 Tim. 4. 14. And *Paul* and *Barnabas* from the *Elders*, Acts 14. 23.

Ordination is the Determination of a Perſon duly qualified for the Office, whereupon he is inveſted in the Miniſtry by the Authority of Chriſt. The Original Word is καθιεῖσωμεν, *Acts* 6. 3. Which according to *Stephanus* and *Scapula* is *præficio*, to put one in Rule, or give him Authority, from whence comes the Word *Præfectus*.

Now this Inveſtiture is appointed by God to be by *Faſting*, and *Prayer*, and *Impoſition* of Hands, *Acts* 13. *init.*

'Tis very obſervable, *Luke* 6. 12, 13. That our bleſſed Lord himſelf ſpent a whole Night in Prayer, before he made choice of his Twelve Apoſtles. And ſuch is the inſufficiency of every Miniſter for ſo great a Work; and ſuch are likely to be his Diſcouragements in it; and the Succeſs of his Miniſtry is ſo entirely depending upon the Divine Bleſſing, that it is highly neceſſary it ſhould be always undertaken by ſuch a ſolemn Preparation, as *Faſting* and *Prayer*.

Nor is it leſs evident, That *Impoſition of Hands* ſhould be careſully obſerv'd, as a neceſſary Rite in this Ordinance. When the great Apoſtle directs *Timothy* as to Ordinations, he appoints them to be by Impoſition of Hands, 1 *Tim.* 5. 22. *Lay Hands ſuddenly upon no Man.* In which *Negative*, ſaith *Wallæus*, an *Affirmative* Precept is plainly included. Namely, That upon mature Deliberation, Examination, and Approbation, he ſhould ordain ſuch to the Miniſtry as were found capable, and fit for it: And that this Ordination ſhould be by laying on of Hands. It is certain, that even in the *Old Teſtament*, Impoſition of Hands was not only uſed, in bleſſing Inferiours, and conſecrating and ſetting apart Sacrifices unto God, but alſo in ordaining or appointing Perſons to an Office, as particularly the *Levites*, Numb. 8. 10, 11. And in the *New Teſtament* we find it uſed, even to *Deacons*, tho' Inferiour Officers, *Acts* 6. 6. And to *Apoſtles*, tho' extraordinary Officers (as *Paul* and *Barnabas.*) And as to the Ordination of *Timothy*, it is expreſly ſaid, to be by the *laying on of the Hands* of the Presbytery, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14.

It is eaſie to trace the *Practice* of *the Chriſtian Church* in this Matter, thro' its ſeveral Ages. And the Conſent of *Fathers*, *Papiſts*, *Lutherans*, *Calviniſts*, *Epiſcopal*, *Claſſical*, and *Congregational* Men; yea of *Hiſtorians*, and *Collectors of Councils*, may be proved by innumerable Inſtances. And it might be alſo ſhewn from that *Ancient Author*, under the Name of *Dionyſius*, and from *Bazil*, and *Jerome*, and the School-men, and the *Decrees* of *Cannon Law*; that Impoſition of Hands was always look'd upon as a neceſſary Part of Ordination. It were endleſs to produce all the Authorities that offer in this Caſe. *Chemnitius* witneſſeth, it was the Practice of the *Lutheran* Churches: And *Peter Martyr* of the *Tigurine* Churches. And by their ſeveral *Confeſſions*, it appears to be the Practice of the *Helvetian*, *Belgick*, *Bohemian*, &c. as well as the *Britiſh* Churches at this Day. And to this

this may be added, what the *New-England* Miniſters in their Platform of Church Diſcipline aſſert, That Church Officers ought to be ordain'd with Impoſition of Hands; and Mr. *Hooker* tells us, he ſaw no Reaſon to diſſent from it. And Dr. *Owen* adds, That it is according to the Mind of Chriſt, that he who is to be ordain'd to Office in any Church, ſhould receive Impoſition of Hands from the Elders of that Church, if there be any in it: And as Mr. *Giles Firmin* has aſſured us, he offered to ordain him by Impoſition of Hands, where there were no Elders in the Church, if another Miniſter would impoſe Hands with him.

Obj. I know it is objected, *That Impoſition of Hands was a Rite by which the Apoſtles conferr'd the Holy Ghoſt, and foraſmuch as extraordinary Gifts are ceaſed, the Rite by which they were conferr'd ſhould ceaſe alſo.*

Sol. To which 'tis anſwered. *Prayer* as well as Impoſition of Hands, was an outward Rite uſed in Ordination. And the Holy Ghoſt was conferr'd by Prayer, *Acts* 8. 15. 'Tis ſaid, *Peter* and *John pray'd, that they might receive the Holy Ghoſt.* And, *v.* 17. *Having pray'd, they laid their Hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghoſt.* But is this a ſufficient Argument, why Prayer ſhould ceaſe in Ordination, becauſe at other Times it conferr'd the Holy Ghoſt? And if Prayer ought not to ceaſe for this Reaſon, why ſhould the Rite of Impoſition of Hands ceaſe, altho' the Holy Ghoſt had ſometimes been conferr'd by that Rite?

But it may be worth our Enquiry, and perhaps what may admit of a very juſt Debate: *Whether the Holy Ghoſt was ever given to any in Ordination by the Impoſition of Hands?* The Queſtion is not, whether it was ever given by the Impoſition of Hands, but whether it was ever given (*in Ordination*) by Impoſition of Hands?

I very well remember, That the Apoſtle ſpeaks of *a Gift, which was given to* Timothy, *by Prophecy, and the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery,* 1 Tim. 4. 14.

4. 14. For the Underſtanding of which Words it may be proper to conſider, *That amongſt the Gifts of Prophecy*, and *diſcerning of Spirits*, ſpoken of, 1 *Cor.* 12. 10. this ſeems to be one, to foretel and chuſe out Perſons meet to do God Service in the Miniſtry. Thus it was in the Caſe of *Timothy*, ſay all the *Greek Scholiaſts* on the Place. *Chryſoſtome* tell us he was choſen by Prophecy, that is, by the Spirit of God. *Theodoret*, that he receiv'd Impoſition of Hands by Divine Revelation. *Oecumenius*, that he was choſen by St. *Paul*, by the Revelation of the Spirit, to be a Diſciple, and to be ordained. *Theophylact* aſſerts the ſame: And now being thus deſign'd and notify'd by the Spirit of Prophecy, to the Work of the Miniſtry, he was by Prayer and Impoſition of Hands ſet a-part for that Office. So that this χάρισμα Θεῦ, the *Gift of God*, ſeems not to be any Gift of Miracles, but the Gift of the Miniſtry: Or Gifts anſwerable to his Calling. He was not to neglect this *Gift* or Office of the Miniſtry, *which was given him by Prophecy, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery.*

But to paſs this Inſtance, we might argue further; If theſe extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit had been conferr'd by this Act of Impoſition of Hands in Ordination, what need then had there been of that Caution to *Timothy*, in all the Ordinations he was to be concern'd in? 1 *Tim.* 5. 22. To *lay Hands ſuddenly upon no Man?* What danger could there have been in laying Hands upon any Man, if by that Act the Perſon was immediately and ſufficiently qualified for the miniſterial Office?

Nor muſt it be forgot, That this Impoſition of Hands has ſometimes been upon ſuch, who had manifeſtly received the Holy Ghoſt before. It is ſaid of *Saul*, *Acts* 9. 17. That he was filled with the Holy Ghoſt. And yet *Acts* 13. *beginning*, He was ordain'd to his Office, by the Impoſition of Hands. It will therefore follow, That Impoſition of Hands in Ordination is a ſolemn Rite, to be ſtill retain'd in the Chriſtian

ſtian Church, and that there is no Force in the fore-mentioned Objection to the contrary.

As to the *Neceſſity of Ordination*, I ſpeak only in ordinary Caſes. I don't ſay what may be done in Caſes extraordinary, when regularly ordained Miniſters cannot be had. And as for ſuch as are intending for the Holy Miniſtry, they may preach with Divine Allowance, as being Miniſters, *Virtualiter, inchoative, diſpoſitive*; and it being neceſſary they ſhould preach as *Probationers*, and firſt be *proved*, before they are *ordained* to their Work.

But for Perſons how well gifted ſoever to preach publickly, ordinarily, and authoritatively, before they are approv'd, ſet apart, and ordained to it, is certainly againſt the Order of the Goſpel, and therefore cannot be with Divine Allowance. *Tit.* 1. 5. *For this cauſe left I thee in Crete, to ſet in order thoſe Things that are wanting, and to ordain Elders in every City as I appointed thee.* This is no other than an invading a peculiar Office contrary to the Apoſtles Precept, 1 *Cor.* 7. 10. *Let every one abide in the ſame Calling, to which he is called.* It is a communicating what was never committed to them; and a great Provocation to God, as appears from the dreadful Judgment inflicted upon *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, for thruſting themſelves into the Prieſts Office, and pleading that all the Congregation were Holy, *Numb.* 16. 3, *ad* 40. For a private Chriſtian, ſays Mr. *Cotton*, *Ex ſe natus*, to take upon him to preach publickly, is a ſacrilegious Uſurpation of the Holy Miniſtry. And as *Diſcip. de Temp.* has it: It is a Phrenzy, that begins to labour with its own Miſchiefs. *Tractent Fabrilia Fabri.*

Second General. *What is it for Perſons allowed of God, to be intruſted with the Goſpel?*

We were allowed of God, ſaith the Apoſtle, *to be put in Truſt with the Goſpel.*

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In diſcourſing on this General, it will be neceſſary for me to ſhew you; 1. What is meant by the *Goſpel*. 2. What it is to be *put* in *Truſt* with the Goſpel.

1. *What is here meant by the Goſpel?*

In anſwer to this: By *Goſpel* we are to underſtand, either,

1. *The whole Scripture in General.* As comprehending the ſacred Oeconomy of Law and Grace, *Mark* 1. 14. *Preaching the Goſpel of the Kingdom of God.* And it is certain, that there was *Goſpel* even under the *Old Teſtament*, Gal. 3. 8. *The Scripture preached the Goſpel unto* Abraham. The ſame Goſpel for Subſtance, tho' not for Clearneſs, which is preached to us. Or,

2. *The New Teſtament in Particular*, Mark 1. 1. *The beginning of the Goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt.* 2 Tim. 1. 10. *Who hath aboliſhed Death, and brought Life and Immortality to Light thro' the Goſpel.* Or,

3. *The ſacred Contents of theſe ſeveral inſpired Books:* Or the Divine Matter therein revealed. As particularly, the *Doctrines* of the Goſpel: The *Worſhip* of the Goſpel: The *Diſcipline* of the Goſpel: And the *Offices* of the Goſpel. All theſe may be comprehended under the General Term, *the Goſpel.*

2. *What is it to be put in Truſt with the Goſpel?*

There are at leaſt theſe Two Things in the Expreſſion, which I ſhall but barely name, and paſs on.

1. *It denotes a Charge committed to our Management*, 1 Tim. 1. 18. *This Charge I commit unto thee.* And,

2. *It denotes a Truſt repoſed in us, to be faithful to that Charge.* The Goſpel is not only *committed* to us, but *concredited*, or intruſted with us, with an Expectation that we ſhould be faithful, 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2. *Let a Man ſo account of us, as of the Miniſters of Chriſt, and Stewards of the Myſteries of God: Moreover it is required of Stewards, that a Man be found faithful.* 2 Tim. 2. 2. *The Things which thou haſt heard of me commit thou to faithful Men.* *In every Truſt* there is a *Confidence* repoſed in the *Truſtees*, that they will be faithful.

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This being premiſed, I ſhall now *reaſſume* the *particular Truſts* before mention'd, and *enquire into what is contain'd in them.* By which I ſhall illuſtrate that Expreſſion in my Text, What it is to be *intruſted with the Goſpel.* And the Meaning is,

1. *To be intruſted with the Doctrines of the Goſpel.* And this contains in it two Things, 1. An Obligation to preach them. And, 2. To defend them.

1. *It contains in it an Obligation to preach them:* He that is intruſted with the Goſpel, muſt preach the Goſpel. He muſt not only be διδακτικος *apt* to teach, but it muſt be his Buſineſs to teach and preach, and inſtruct the People. *Mark* 16. 15. *Go ye into all the World and preach the Goſpel to every Creature.* God has laid a Neceſſity upon Miniſters to preach the Goſpel, 1 *Cor.* 9. 16. *A Neceſſity is laid upon me, yea wo is unto me, if I preach not the Goſpel.*

But it is not only the Duty of ſuch to preach, but they muſt preach *boldly, faithfully,* and *plainly.*

1. *They muſt preach boldly.* I mean with a *becoming* Boldneſs, for there is a Modeſty and Fear that becomes the Pulpit: As there is a Confidence and Noiſe that is the Shame of it. It is obſerved by *Seneca,* That the greateſt Warriors always *ſhake* at their firſt Engagement. And the beſt Orators, even *Tully* himſelf, the Father of *Roman* Eloquence, when he firſt began to ſpeak to the People, *trembled.* And the ſame Concern is not unſeemly in a Chriſtian Orator; The Conſideration of the Greatneſs of his Work, is ſufficient to poſſeſs his Mind with Fear.

But notwithſtanding this, There is a Boldneſs requiſite for every Miniſter, and a Fearfulneſs that is greatly to be blamed. The *Prieſthood* was at firſt the Reward of a ſingular Courage, which is Intimation enough of the conſtant Boldneſs, Zeal, and Vigour, that ought to attend the Exerciſe of it.

The Miniſters of *Chriſt* repreſent their great Lord and Maſter, and from him they have received their Commiſſion and Authority to preach, and therefore they

need not be afraid of the Faces of any Men in the Diſcharge of their Miniſtry. When *Jeremy* was ſent to propheſie againſt *Judah*, his Commiſſion ran thus, *Jer.* 1. 7, 8, 17, 18. *Whatſoever I command thee, thou ſhalt ſpeak, be not afraid of their Faces. Ariſe and ſpeak unto them all that I command thee, be not diſmay'd at their Faces. For behold I have made thee a fenced City, and an iron Pillar, and brazen Walls againſt the whole Land, againſt the Kings and Princes, againſt the Prieſt and the People.* When *Ezekiel* was ſent to propheſie againſt *Iſrael*, God gave him a Forehead to outface the Wickedneſs of the People, *Chap.* 3. 8, 9. *Behold I have made thy Face ſtrong againſt their Faces, and thy Forehead ſtrong againſt their Foreheads, as an Adamant harder than Flint have I made thy Forehead, fear them not, neither be diſmay'd at their Looks, tho' they be a rebellious Houſe.* It was *Paul*'s Charge to *Titus*, *Chap.* 2. *ult. To ſpeak and exhort, and rebuke with all Authority*, μετὰ πάσης ἐπιταγῆς, *i. e.* with all miniſterial Authority: for where there is no Authority there will ſoon be Contempt.

2. *They muſt preach faithfully*, and take up the pious Reſolution of good *Micaiah*, 1 *Kings* 22. 14. *As the Lord liveth, whatſoever the Lord ſaith unto me, that will I ſpeak.* What they preach to the People, muſt be what they have had in Charge from God, 1 *Cor.* 11. 23. *For I have received of the Lord, that which alſo I delivered unto you.* And whatſoever they have in Charge from God, that muſt they preach unto the People, *Acts* 20. 26, 27. *I take you to record this Day, that I am pure from the Blood of all Men, for I have not ſhun'd to declare unto you all the Counſel of God.*

3. *They muſt preach plainly*, and fit all their Diſcourſes to the Underſtandings and Capacities of their Hearers, not to amuſe and aſtoniſh the People with an unintelligible Sound, which would be but to teach them to be ignorant, and inſtruct them how to know nothing; but to inform their Minds, and amend their Lives, and to build them up in Faith and Religion. And in Order to this they muſt be ſatisfied to

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throw away a Thouſand fine Words and quaint Phraſes, for one that's plain and proper, and pungent, that's like to penetrate the Conſcience and reach the Heart. *Tertullian* ſeverely checks thoſe Preachers, who dreſs up Chriſtianity in *Philoſophical* rather than *Evangelical* Terms, *Qui Platonicum Chriſtianiſmum procudunt Chriſtianis.*

A crucified *Stile*, ſays Mr. *Flavel*, certainly becomes the Preachers of a crucified *Chriſt*. An iron Key fitted to the Wards of the Lock, is more uſeful than a golden one that will not open the Door to the Treaſure, 'Tis ſaid of *Ezra* and the *Levites*, *Neh.* 8. 8. *That they read in the Book of the Law of the Lord diſtinctly, and gave the Senſe, and made the People to underſtand the Meaning.* And it is noted of the Apoſtles at the Day of *Pentecoſt*, as an exemplary Preſident to the Miniſters of the Goſpel for ever, *Acts* 2. 6. *That every Man heard them ſpeak in his own Language.* It is not for Miniſters to be Readers of *Algebra*, or to confound their People, but in the plaineſt and moſt familiar Manner, to ſhew to them the Way of Salvation. Their Sermons like Diamonds ſhould be clear as well as ſolid. But,

2. *It contains in it an Obligation to defend them.* They that are intruſted with the Goſpel, muſt ſtand up in the Defence of the Goſpel. They muſt not only be *Teachers* of the Chriſtian Faith, but they muſt be *Defenders* of it. Πᾶς φυλακτικὸς ἀγωνιστικός, ſaith the *Philoſopher*; He that would keep any thing ſafe, muſt reſiſt the Invaders that would force it from him. The Miniſters of *Chriſt* muſt be *valiant for the Truth:* And tread in the Steps of their Lord and Maſter, *Who taught the Way of God in Truth, and cared not for any Man, nor regarded the Perſon of Men*, *Mat.* 22. 16.

They are appointed by God to eſtabliſh the People, and to convince Gainſayers. To contend earneſtly for the Faith that was once delivered, and to chooſe rather to undergo the Shock of their Adverſaries, and weather the Storm, than to ſit down patiently in the

Calm, with the Loſs of Truth. They are not in Prudence to contend too ſoon, for Errors are ſometimes beſt cured by Neglect, and in a little Time grow weary of themſelves: nor muſt they delay too late, leſt they get Head, and be paſt Retrieve.

2. *To be intruſted with the Worſhip of the Goſpel*: And this alſo contains in it theſe two Things, 1. An Obligation to attend and urge it. 2. To maintain the Purity and Simplicity of it.

1. *It contains in it an Obligation to attend and urge it.* They that are intruſted with the Goſpel, muſt not themſelves neglect the Worſhip and Ordinances of the Goſpel: But *continue ſtedfaſt as in Doctrine, ſo in Fellowſhip, and breaking of Bread, and Prayers*, *Acts* 2. 42. They are to be conſtantly God's Mouth to the People, and the Mouth of the People unto God. They are always to attend, celebrate and adminiſter every Goſpel Ordinance for the Converſion and Edification of the People. And earneſtly to invite *Chriſt*'s Sheep into theſe ſpiritual Paſtures, where they may feed, and reſt, and find Refreſhment. And to be always urging them to a diligent Attendance on Goſpel Worſhip; *Mat.* 28. 20. *Teaching them to obſerve all Things whatſoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always even to the End of the World.*

2. *It contains in it an Obligation to maintain the Purity and Simplicity of it.* They that are intruſted with the Goſpel, muſt never contentedly ſuffer the *Truth of God to be changed into a Lie*, Rom. 1. 25. *Nor polluted Bread to be offer'd upon God's Altar*, Mal. 1. 13. They muſt keep the Worſhip of God free from the Innovations and Corruptions of Men. *Deut.* 12. 32. *Whatſoever I command you, obſerve to do it, thou ſhalt not add thereto, nor diminiſh from it.*

'Tis too natural for Men *to defile themſelves with their own Works*, and to *go a whoring after their own Inventions*, Pſal. 106. 39. And by this Means their Worſhip is unprofitable and fruitleſs, to ſay no worſe, *Mat.* 15. 9. *In vain do they worſhip me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men.* The

The Apoſtle could not bear the Superſtition of the *Athenians* without reproving it, *Acts* 17. 22. *Ye Men of* Athens, *I perceive that in all Things you are too Superſtitious.* It was a Crime charged upon the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, that the Terms of their Communion were ſuch as to exclude many upright and ſound-hearted Believers, *Mat.* 23. 13. *They would not ſuffer thoſe that were entring to go in.*

God has every where declared himſelf a Jealous God for his own Worſhip, *Exod.* 34. 14. *The Lord whoſe Name is Jealous, is a Jealous God:* That is, as his Name is, ſo is he: He every way anſwers his Name. And it is a *dangerous Thing to provoke ſuch a God to Jealouſie*, 1 Cor. 10. 22. 'Tis certainly the Duty of Miniſters to *ſet in order* the Things that are either *wanting*, or *Irregular* in *Divine Worſhip:* And to reduce all to the Goſpel-Standard, *John* 4. 23, 24. *The Hour cometh, and now is, when the true Worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in Spirit and Truth, for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him; God is a Spirit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth.*

3. *To be intruſted with the Diſcipline of the Goſpel.* And this contains in it, in like Manner, two Things. 1. An Obligation to exerciſe Church-Diſcipline. 2. To ſubmit to it.

1. *It contains in it an Obligation to exerciſe Church-Diſcipline.* The Miniſters of Chriſt being appointed to feed their Flocks, are neceſſarily ſuppoſed to have Authority alſo to govern them. The very Name of *Paſtor* carries Authority in it. They are conſtituted *Stewards of the Houſe of God*, and therefore have the *Keys* of the Houſe committed to them, to *admit*, *exclude*, and *reſtore*, according to the Direction of the Goſpel.

There are theſe Three or Four ſolemn Acts, that fall under this part of their Charge.

1. *Admiſſion.* They are intruſted with the Admiſſion or Initiation of Perſons into the Goſpel Church: *Mat.* 28. 19, 20. *All Power is given unto me in Heaven and*

and in Earth; Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.

2. *Admonition.* When the Apoſtle ſpeaks of Miniſters, he ſays they are ſuch, *at labour amongſt their People, and are over them in the Lord, and admoniſh them,* 1 Theſ. 5. 12. And this is a Duty charg'd upon them, 2 *Theſ.* 3. 15. *Count him not as an Enemy, but admoniſh him as a Brother.* 2 Tim. 4. 2. *Preach the Word, be inſtant in Seaſon, and out of Seaſon, Reprove, Rebuke, Exhort, with all Long-ſuffering and Doctrine.*

3. *Excommunication.* When private Admonitions will not do, publick Cenſures muſt follow, *Mat.* 18. 15, *ad* 19. *If thy Brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his fault betwixt thee and him alone, if he ſhall hear thee, thou haſt gain'd thy Brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the Mouth of two or three Witneſſes, every Word may be eſtabliſhed. And if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it to the Church, but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee, as an Heathen Man, and a Publican. Verily I ſay unto you, whatſoever ye ſhall bind on Earth, ſhall be bound in Heaven; and whatſoever ye ſhall looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven.* The Apoſtle blames the Miniſters of *Corinth* for not excommunicating the inceſtuous Perſon, and commands them, 1 *Cor.* 5. 7. *To purge out the old leaven, that they may become a new Lump.* And *v.* 13. *To put away from amongſt them that wicked Perſon.* And it ſeems plain, that he was actually excommunicated by them, for 2 *Cor.* 2. 6. The Cenſure is called a *Puniſhment inflicted upon him by many,* that is, by their Miniſters authoritatively from Chriſt, together with the Conſent of the People.

4. *Abſolution.* When Chriſt ſays to his Miniſters, *Whatſoever ye looſe on Earth, ſhall be looſed in Heaven,* Mat. 18. 18. He plainly implies, That they had Power of abſolving or looſing ſuch as were Penitent,

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and of reſtoring them to the Communion of the Church again. If they had not Power to do it, he would never ratifie it when done: Or ſet his Seal to an Uſurpation, and a Lie. But it muſt be remembred, That this their Power is only *Miniſterial* and *Declarative*, 'tis God's Prerogative, and proper to him only, to abſolve and reſtore *Authoritatively* and of himſelf.

2. *It contains in it an Obligation to ſubmit to Goſpel Diſcipline.* The *Spirits of the Prophets are to be ſubject to the Prophets*, 1 Cor. 14. 32. It is ſometimes convenient and neceſſary to *ſay to* Archippus, *Take heed to the Miniſtry which thou haſt received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it*, Col. 4. 17.

Perſons admitted into Holy Orders may by their miſmanagement juſtly expoſe themſelves to open Cenſures. *Receive not an Accuſation, ſaith* the Apoſtle, *againſt an Elder, under two or three Witneſſes*, 1 Tim. 5. 19. Which clearly implies, that there may be an Accuſation, and a well-grounded one, and ſuch as might be received, even againſt an Elder. *Demas*, it's probable, was cenſured by the Apoſtles, for *forſaking them, and loving this preſent World*, and is thought by ſome upon his Repentance to be reſtored. Chriſt ſolemnly admoniſhes the *Angels* of the *Seven Churches* of *Aſia*. Paul *withſtood* Peter *to the Face, becauſe he was to be blamed*, Gal. 2. 11. So that this is a neceſſary Work, tho' to be managed with great Prudence and Caution, the Oyl of Reproof is to be work'd in with the ſoft, and warm, and gentle Hand of Love, and then it's moſt like to become Effectual.

4. *To be intruſted with the Offices of the Goſpel.* And this contains in it theſe Three Things. 1. An Obligation to diſcharge them. 2. To confer them. And 3. To do it with all needful Caution.

1. *It contains in it an Obligation to diſcharge the Offices of the Goſpel.* Having undertaken the Miniſtry, they are obliged *to fulfil it*, Col. 4. 17. and to *make full proof of it*, 1 Tim. 4. 5. They are to *give up themſelves*

ſelves wholly to it, and to take heed to themſelves and to their Doctrine, that they might both ſave themſelves and them that hear them, 1 Tim. 4. 15, 16.

2. *It contains in it an Obligation to confer the Offices of the Goſpel:* Or miniſterially to inveſt others in the ſame Office. *Ordinis eſt ordinare.* The Power of Ordination belongs to thoſe who are themſelves dignified with Orders. This was in the Apoſtles Time actually exerciſed, both by the *extraordinary* and *ordinary* Officers, that were then conſtituted in the Church. Sometimes by the *Apoſtles*, and ſuch as were their *Fellow-Labourers* in their unfixed Miniſtry, as by *Saul* and *Barnabas*, who ordain'd Elders in every Church. And *Titus*, who was appointed to ordain Elders in every City in *Crete*. Sometimes by *ordinary* Preachers or Elders: As in *Timothy*'s Ordination, tho' an *Evangeliſt*, 1 Tim. 4. 14. *Neglect not the Gift which is in thee, which was given thee by Prophecy, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery.* Here are the Hands of the Presbytery upon him, as well as the Hands of the Apoſtle, ſo that the Power of Ordination was in the one as well as in the other. We read of *Teachers* as well as Prophets concern'd, in the Ordination of *Paul* and *Barnabas* (not to the Apoſtolical Office, but to ſome ſpecial and eminent Exerciſe of their Miniſtry.) Nor does it appear, that the Apoſtles ever challeng'd or exercis'd a ſole Power of Ordination themſelves, much leſs ever delegated it to others, as a Superior Order to Presbyters, who are all Goſpel Biſhops. Human Conſtitutions we know have denied this Power to meer Presbyters, but we have not yet found where the Scripture has: But believe it to be *committed to all ſuch, who are faithful and able,* 2 Tim. 2. 2.

3. *It contains in it an Obligation to do this with Caution.* To examine into the Qualifications of Men, before they put them into this Office, 1 *Tim.* 5. 22. *Lay Hands ſuddenly on no Man, neither be partakers of other Mens Sins, keep thy ſelf pure.*

I doubt not but there muſt be ſome Allowances made as to Gifts and Acquirements. There may be many uſeful, that cannot be excellent. Weaker Gifts, ſays *one* of our *Moderns*, rooted in a gracious Heart, will grow by uſing, but nothing grows without a Root. Men of Integrity, tho' but of mean Learning, may be Inſtruments of great Good in their Generations. The *Moon* tho' it be void of Light in it ſelf, and but a very ſmall Body, in Compariſon of the fixed Stars, yet it affords a much greater Light to Men, than any of thoſe Stars, even of the firſt Magnitude. The plaineſt Men have ſometimes done the beſt Service in *Chriſt*'s Church, as tender-eyed *Leah* brought forth more Children, than beautiful *Rachel*; but ſtill Integrity, Prudence, and Fidelity, are the indiſpenſible Qualifications of ſuch as are ordained to this Truſt.

But it is more than Time to proceed to the third General.

Third general. *When may any be ſaid to be Men-pleaſers in the Management of this Truſt?*

To this I ſhall anſwer, but briefly, in theſe 3 or 4 Particulars.

1. *When they ſubject their Truſts to the Humours of Men:* As for Inſtance, when they *corrupt* the *Doctrines* of the Goſpel to countenance the Opinions and Practices of corrupt Men. When they *adulterate* the *Worſhip of the Goſpel*, in Complaiſance to the Uſurpations and Impoſitions of Men. When they *ſuſpend the Diſcipline of the Goſpel*, in Favour of the Profaneneſs, and Immorality of Men. And when they *proſtitute* the *Offices* of the Goſpel, in Regard to the Importunities and Sollicitations of Men.

2. *When they betray their Truſts to the carnal Intereſts of Men:* To inſtance but in one Particular; When they *ordain Officers* in the Church only to qualify them for an outward Maintenance, 1 *Sam.* 2. 36. *Put me into the Prieſts Office that I might eat Bread.* The Work

of the Miniſtry is not to be committed to *Novices*, but to *faithful* and *able Men*, 1 Tim. 3. 6. Not to ſerve the *Avarice* of any, but only the *Intereſt of Souls.*

3. *When they ſuſpend Reproofs in Favour of Men:* And act not a Monitors but as Flatterers, and thereby bring upon themſelves the Blood of Souls, proving themſelves to be true Prieſts indeed, that is, *bloody Sacrificers.*

With God there is no Reſpect of Perſons in theſe Caſes, nor ſhould there be any with his Miniſters. Let *Nathan* reprove *David*, and *Hoſea* the *Prieſts*, and the *Houſe of Iſrael*, and the *Houſe of the King*; Let *Micah* inveigh againſt the Vices of the *Princes*, of the *Prophets*, and of the *People.* Let *John* the *Baptiſt* tell *Herod* of his Inceſt. And *Paul* preach to *Felix* and *Druſilla*, of Unrighteouſneſs and Incontinency. And let every private Miniſter be faithful in his Poſt, and not ſlaviſhly afraid of what may follow. The Church will be his *Aſylum*, his Pulpit will be his Caſtle, his Tower, and his Strong-hold. But he that's remiſs in this, and can φιλιππίζειν, *i. e.* flatter and court the Great becauſe they are great, and forbear Reproofs, may juſtly come under the Cenſure of the Text, for being a Man-pleaſer in the Management of his Goſpel Truſt.

4. *When they diſcharge their Truſt for the Applauſe of Men:* And court only their Favour, Approbation, and Friendſhip. This is without Doubt contrary to the Diſpoſition, Sincerity, and Fidelity of the Godly, and brings under very heavy and diſmal Guilt. Such as *ſeek Glory from Men* only, have their *Reward only from Men.* They have their *Reward* already, but their *Puniſhment* ſtill remains.

Obj. But againſt what has been ſaid, it might probably be *objected*, that the Apoſtle was very induſtrious to *pleaſe Men*, yea to pleaſe *all* Men, in the conſtant Diſcharge of his Miniſtry; and ſeems to have left it upon Record, as a Precedent to others, 1 *Cor.*

9. 20,

9. 20, *ad* 24. *Unto the Jews became I a Jew, that I may gain the Jews; to them that are under the Law, as under the Law, that I may gain them that are under the Law; To them that are without Law as without Law, being not without Law to God, but under the Law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without Law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all Things to all Men, that I might by all Means save some.*

Sol. To this I answer, 'Tis true the Apostle in all Things *indifferent*, accommodated himself to all Men. It is not for Ministers to disoblige any without Cause, much less to irritate or stir up the Corruptions of any. *Let every one of us please his Neighbour for his Good to Edification*, Rom. 15. 2. We are to be *Servants* to all, tho' not *Slaves* to any: nor are we to be Servants to their *Lusts*, but only to their *Infirmities* and *Weaknesses*. Gal. 1. 10. *If I please Men, i. e.* in any thing sinful, *I am no more the Servant of Christ.* The Apostle it's true abridg'd himself in the Use of his Christian Liberty, and by a charitable Condescension, complied with all, as far as he could, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, but it was not for any private Gain to himself, or any selfish Design, or secular Interest whatever, but only for the Sake of the Gospel, that he might gain over more to the Belief and Reception of it. He stooped not thus to others to serve himself, but only that he might serve his Lord and Master, and if by any Means he might save some. He did not *symbolize* with any in their Sin, but only in Things lawful and indifferent, 1 *Cor.* 10. 32, 33. *I please all Men in all Things, i. e.* wherein the Law of God has left me at Liberty, *not seeking my own Profit, but the Profit of many, that they might be saved.*

Fourth General. *When do they approve themselves to an Heart-searching God in the Discharge of it?*

To this I shall give but this short Answer.

1. *When they keep their Eyes and their Hearts to the Goſpel Rule.* The Truſt of the Goſpel muſt be diſcharg'd by the Rule of the Goſpel. The Apoſtle refers to Miniſters as well as People, when he ſays, *Gal.* 6. 16. *To as many as walk by this Rule, Peace be unto you.* There muſt be an inward as well as an outward Regard to this, in a faithful, diligent, and impartial Diſcharge of the various Parts of this their Truſt.

2. *When they impreſs their Hearts with the momentous Weight of this their Truſt.* By ſeriouſly conſidering it as a Goſpel Truſt, a Truſt of Souls, of a Multitude of Souls, and of the eternal Concerns of all theſe Souls: And a Truſt committed to them by God himſelf, who will ſhortly judge them for all.

3. *When they have holy Aims and Ends in it.* When with a ſingle Eye and ſincere Heart, they impartially deſign the Glory of God, and the Converſion, Edification, and Salvation of the Souls of Men. The Apoſtle propoſes *Timothy* as an excellent Pattern for this; *Phil.* 2. 20, 21. *I have no Man like minded,* ſays he, *who will naturally care for your Eſtate, for all ſeek their own Things, not the Things that are Jeſus Chriſt's.* 'Tis a *pure End in Service,* that gives a Perſon the greateſt Comfort *at the end of Service.*

4. *When they diligently exert themſelves in it.* A ſlothful Miniſter cannot be a faithful Miniſter, *Mat.* 25. 26. *Thou wicked and ſlothful Servant.* The Labours of the Miniſtry, ſaith *Luther,* will exhauſt the very Marrow from our Bones, and haſten old Age and Death upon us.

A Miniſter that would approve himſelf to God, muſt be often watching whilſt others are ſleeping. He muſt ſtudy to Paleneſs, and preach to Faintneſs. And bleſſed be God, if with aking Heads, and pained Breaſts, and waſted Lungs, and trembling Limbs, in the Diſcharge of his miniſterial Work, he can, at laſt, approve himſelf to the Searcher of Hearts, his Witneſs and his Judge, and hear thoſe Heart-reviving Words,

in

in the awful and tremendous Day, *Well done good and faithful Servant.* But this brings me to the

Application.

Which muſt be very ſhort; for I have much outrun *my Intentions* already, and I am afraid *your Patience* too. But give me Leave to conclude all, with one Word to *Miniſters*, and another to the *People.*

1. *To Miniſters.*

And ſuffer me, my *Beloved Brethren*, and Fellow-Labourers in the Lord's Harveſt, moſt earneſtly to deſire you to be *faithful to your Truſt.* To *feed the flocks of God, over which the Holy Ghoſt has made you Overſeers.* To be faithful and prudent, and humble, and peaceable, and diligent, and zealous in the Management of your Truſt.

Remember your ſolemn Charge, and I beſeech you let your Conſciences feel the awful Authority of it, 2 *Tim.* 4. 1, 2. *To preach the Word, and to be inſtant in ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon, to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all Long-ſuffering and Doctrine.*

Remember alſo your ſolemn Account, for *Heb.* 13. 17. *You watch for the Souls of Men, as thoſe that muſt give an Account* in the approaching Judgment. *Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, we perſwade Men*, as thoſe that would not be brought within the compaſs of the Terrors of that Day.

It is not an eaſie Matter for us, *my Brethren, to keep our ſelves pure from the Blood of all Men.* It is too common for the beſt, to flag in their Work, and be diſcouraged at their Difficulties, and to grow remiſs and careleſs. And at other Times to *daub with untemper'd Mortar*, and to flatter their People, and extenuate and palliate their Sins.

We muſt *dare* to be faithful, if ever we would be found ſo. It muſt be Grace and Courage, and Reſolution, and Zeal, that muſt carry us out in our Miniſtry, if ever we would approve our ſelves to God in it,

it, or be the Inſtruments of any ſaving Good to the People by it.

As all Souls are equally precious, and Sin is that abominable Evil which God hates, where-ever it is found (tho' it ſhould be deck'd with Purple, and guarded with Enſigns of Authority, or tho' it ſhould be clad with more Reverend Robes, and ſeem to flie to the Altar for Protection) yet it muſt be impartially reprov'd, expoſed, and condemn'd by us, ſo far as our Sphere extends, as we would not bring upon our ſelves the Guilt of it.

Let it never be forgotten, That ἀλήθεια and δήλωσις were Engraven on the High-prieſts Breaſt-plate: And that *Truth* and *Plain-dealing* are the moſt becoming Ornaments of Goſpel Miniſters.

The Eye of the great Shepherd and Biſhop of Souls is conſtantly upon us, and he will certainly reward our Diligence, or puniſh our Negligence for evermore. We muſt not miſtake our *Biſhopricks* for *Sineeures*, or think we may loiter, and yet be found guiltleſs.

We cannot be falſe to our Truſts, but we break the ſacred Engagements, and Vows of our Ordination, which ought to be dreaded by us more than Death.

Let the Thoughts of this therefore awaken us to the moſt aſſiduous Diligence in the Proſecution of our ſacred Work. And let the Approbation of God ſatisfie us in it, without the Applauſes of Men. *In his Favour there is Life, and his Loving-kindneſs is better than Life. What a ſmall matter is it to be judg'd of Man's Judgment? We have one that judgeth us, even the Lord. It is from him that our Sentence comes.* The Judgment of Men muſt be judged by God, *Prov.* 24. 24, 25. *He that ſaith unto the Wicked, thou art righteous, him ſhall the People curſe, Nations ſhall abhor him; but to them that rebuke him ſhall be Delight, and a good Bleſſing ſhall come upon them.*

'Tis true indeed, we ſhould ſhew a prudent regard to the different Tempers, Diſpoſitions, and States of Men

Men, but we are never to regard the Humours and Luſts of any, or to betray the Truths of Chriſt, or the Intereſts of Souls, to ſerve them or our own Pride by it.

'Tis an old Obſervation, and has a great deal of Truth in it, that it is the greateſt Folly for an ambitious Man to court his own Glory, for he can never attain it by purſuing after it. The readieſt way to Honour is by an honeſt Contempt of it. It is a ſhadow which flies from you if you follow it, but follows you as faſt as you flie from it. Thoſe who can now be ſatisfied with *his* Approbation who *ſees in Secret*, ſhall be ſure to be hereafter *rewarded openl*.

It is the greateſt *Self Flattery* and *Vanity* in the World, for any Man to attempt, or imagine it to be poſſible, to pleaſe Men. The Almighty God himſelf, the Maker of the World, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt the merciful Redeemer, could never do it, and how much leſs ſhould we?

But it is not only fooliſh and fruitleſs to attempt it, but it is alſo as *ſinful and dangerous*. For as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Ezek.* 13. 19. *We may quickly ſlay the Souls, that ſhould not die, or ſave the Souls alive that ſhould not live: i. e.* Either ſadden and grieve the Godly, or encourage and harden the Wicked by it to their ruin. And how can we think to anſwer this at God's Eternal Judgment? Oh! How hideous and diſmal will the outcry of poor periſhing Souls be, againſt ſuch as were intruſted by God with their Salvation? When they ſhall accuſe them and ſay, *Parentes ſenſimus Paricidas*, our Guides have miſlead us, our Watchmen have betray'd us, our Paſtors have ſtarved us, our Stewards have defrauded us, and our Fathers have turned Parricides.

2. *To the People.*

And the Exhortation to them is this, *Not to be offended at our Faithfulneſs, in the diſcharge of our miniſterial Truſt.* You have heard, Sirs, what a Truſt is com-

committed to us, and what a variety of Duty is thereupon incumbent on each of us: Bear with us then we beſeech you, in our Impartiality and Plainneſs with you, for we cannot in Faithfulneſs to God, and your Souls, and our own Conſciences, be otherwiſe than plain and impartial.

We would do any Thing for you; we may boldly ſay, we would do any Thing for you, *but Sin.* We are willing *to ſpend*, and *be ſpent in your Service: Yea, and if we be offered upon the Sacrifice and Service of your Faith* (if we don't miſtake our ſelves) *we would joy and rejoice in it*, Phil. 2. 17. *It is in our Hearts* (we hope we may ſay as the Apoſtle did before us, 2 *Cor.* 7. 3.) *to die, and to live with you.* But we would not, we dare not, we will not be unfaithful: But had much rather bear your *Cenſures* in Time, than your *Curſes* in Eternity. *And this is our rejoicing, the Teſtimony of our Conſciences, that in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, not with fleſhly wiſdom, but by the Grace of God, we have our Converſation in the World*, 2 Cor. 1. 12.

It is the great deſire of our Souls to be ſerviceable to you, but if we cannot help you, we would not hurt you. If we cannot be the happy Inſtruments of your Salvation, we would not by any Means be acceſſory to your Death and Damnation. We muſt warn the Wicked of his Wickedneſs, and if he will not turn, his Blood muſt lie upon his own Head, but deliver *us* from Blood-guiltineſs, O our God.

We are willing to pleaſe you, ſo far as we may profit you, and what can you deſire more? You call us to be your Miniſters, and would you have us to become the Miniſters of Unrighteouſneſs, or Servants of Sin; we would not only be careful for our ſelves, and our own Souls, but for yours alſo.

The Truſt which God has repoſed in us, is ſo unconceivably great, that it amazes us, and often makes our Hearts to ſhake and tremble within us. Oh! tempt us not then to be unfaithful, but pity us, and

pray

pray for us: For with all our Faithfulneſs, we ſhall but be ſcarcely ſaved at laſt: So ſtrict and ſolemn muſt our Account be, that the beſt of us had need to pray, *God be merciful to us Sinners.*

To *Conclude*, It is not only *our* Intereſt, but it is unſpeakably *yours*, That we ſhould be faithful, and you your ſelves will approve it at laſt, whether you are ſaved, or whether you periſh. If you are *ſaved*, you will bleſs God we did not betray and humour you to your Deſtruction. If you *periſh*, we ſhall be juſtified in your Conſciences, even in Hell, that we did our Duty. But it is our deſire above all Things, that *we may be your rejoicing, and that ye may be ours in the great Day of the Lord Jeſus.* And in order to that, *As we are allowed of God to be put in Truſt with the Goſpel, even ſo* (will) *we ſpeak, not as pleaſing Men, but God who trieth our Heart!*

THE
Confeſſion of Faith.

I Believe there is only one God, a Being of abſolute and infinite Perfection, a moſt pure Spirit; And that he is Unchangeable, Eternal, Incomprehenſible in all his Perfections; ſuch as his Wiſdom, Power, Holineſs, Juſtice, Goodneſs, and Truth: And that he hath all Life, Glory, and Bleſſedneſs, in and from himſelf; and ſtands not in need of any other Being to make him more Happy or Glorious than he really and eſſentially is.

I Believe that there is a Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity; that there are Three Perſons of the ſame Eſſence, Power, and Eternity; God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoſt: yet (in a myſterious Manner) are one in their Nature and Perfections. A Myſtery which (tho' it cannot be comprehended by Reaſon; yet as I ſee it not contrary to it) I make the Object of my Faith, and do really and truly believe it.

I Believe that this Great God hath from Eternity decreed whatever comes to paſs.

I Believe that the Holy Scriptures (contain'd in the Old and New Teſtament) are of Divine Authority; and that the Knowledge of God, and his Divine Will, ſo far as is neceſſary to Salvation, may be learned hence. I Believe they were written by Holy Men; and that by the Inſpiration of God: and are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and Inſtruction

ſtruction in Righteouſneſs: That the Man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good Works. I Believe they are the only Rule of our Faith and Practice.

By Faith I underſtand that the Worlds were made by the Word of God; ſo that the Things that are ſeen, were not made of Things that do appear.

I Believe that he made the Heavens, and the Earth, and the Fountains of Water, and the ſeveral Beings that in them are; and that there is nothing that exiſts, but what receiv'd its Exiſtence from him. I Believe particularly that he made Angels and Men.

I Believe that he who made the World, upholds all Things by the Word of his Power; and governs all Things in Wiſdom: and that as he created all Things, and for his Pleaſure they are and were created; ſo he doth according to his Pleaſure in the Armies of Heaven, and amongſt the Inhabitants of this lower World; rules and over-rules all Things, to the great End his Infinite Wiſdom has propos'd.

I Believe in Reſpect of Man that God made him upright, in a Pure, Holy, and Innocent State, after his own Likeneſs: but he ſought out many Inventions.

I Believe that there was at firſt a Covenant made with Man, the Terms of which were *Obey and live: Sin and dye.* I Believe that (as our firſt Parents have ſinned, and thereby become obnoxious to Death Spiritual, Temporal, and Eternal: ſo alſo) all their Race are Partakers of their Guilt, and that as Sin came into the World, ſo Death by Sin; and that Death hath paſſed upon all Men, for that all have ſinned.

I Believe that when Man had fallen, and violated this firſt Covenant, it pleas'd God to give a new and better Covenant, the Covenant of Grace. I Believe, that this Covenant belongs to all Believers both under the Legal and Goſpel Diſpenſation. I Believe, that *Jeſus Chriſt* the Eternal only begotten Son of God, was the only Mediator of this Covenant of

Grace. I Believe that he took upon him our Natrue; that he was God manifeſt in the Fleſh, in a myſterious Manner. I Believe that he was the ſame Subſtance with the Father, and that he who thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, took upon him the Form of a Servant, and became Obedient unto Death, even the Death of the Croſs. I Believe, his Holy Life, his Meritorious Death, and Sufferings: that he finiſh'd the Work of Man's Redemption, paid the Price, ſatisfy'd the Demands of Divine Juſtice, and purchas'd Grace and Salvation for all them that Believe. I Believe, that as he dy'd, ſo he conquer'd Death, and Hell, led Captivity captive, ſpoil'd Principalities and Powers, Triumphing over them. I Believe, that he roſe again according to the Scriptures, and that he aſcended on high, and is exalted a Prince and a Saviour, to give Repentance, and Remiſſion of Sins unto his People. I Believe, that as he hath purchas'd ineſtimable Bleſſings for them that believe; ſo I Believe, that theſe Bleſſings are apply'd to us by the Spirit of God.

I Believe, that Faith is the Work of the Spirit of God: and that by this we take hold of theſe Benefits. I Believe, that it is the Spirit's Work to convince us of Sin, and of our Miſery, and to drive us out of our ſelves unto *Chriſt*.

I Believe, that it is only by the Righteouſneſs of *Chriſt* we are juſtify'd, as the procuring Cauſe of our Juſtification. I Believe, that nothing that we can do can merit any good Thing at the Hand of God; but that our Righteouſneſſes are but as filthy Rags. I Believe, that they who are juſtify'd and ſanctify'd, ſhall at laſt be glorify'd. I Believe, that where there is a true Faith, there will be the Fruit of Good Works. I Believe, that tho' all theſe be of God, yet theſe Benefits are convey'd in the Uſe of thoſe external Means and Ordinances of his Appointment; Eſpecially the Word, Sacraments, and Prayer; and that only in the Uſe of theſe Means we can expect his Bleſſing.

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I Believe, that to this End *Chriſt* hath appointed a Goſpel Miniſtry, to continue to the End of the World. I Believe, that no Religion, or Way of Worſhip, which is not agreeable to his Inſtitutions, will be either pleaſing to him, or accepted of him.

I Believe, there are only two Sacraments of Divine Inſtitution, *viz.* Baptiſm, and the Lord's Supper.

I Believe, that Magiſtracy is an Ordinance of God, and that it is our Duty to yeild Obedience to lawful Magiſtrates in the Lord.

I Believe, that here we are Probationers for Eternity; and that this World is preparatory to another.

I do really and profeſſedly believe, there are only Two States after this World; A State of Eternal Happineſs, in the Viſion, and Fruition of the Great God in Heaven; and a State of Eternal Inexpreſſible Miſery in Hell. I Believe, that the Souls of Men when they leave their Bodies go to one of theſe States. I Believe, it is appointed for all Men once to die, and after Death the Judgment.

I Believe, that as we are in a State of Probation; ſo there will be a Day of Recompence, when Men ſhall confeſs that verily there is a Reward for the Righteous; verily there is a God that judgeth.

I Believe, there will be a ſecond and glorious Appearance of the Son of Man: when he will come in Glory, and the Glory of his Father, and of his Holy Angels. I Believe, that then there will be a general Reſurrection of the Juſt, and the Unjuſt; when the Souls of Men ſhall be united to their Bodies. I Believe, the Dead in *Chriſt* ſhall riſe firſt; and ſhall be openly acknowledg'd, clear'd, and rewarded by *Chriſt* the great Judge: and made perfectly happy in the Eternal Fruition of all Good; and that the wicked, unbelieving, impenitent, and diſobedient, ſhall be condemn'd to Eternal Miſery.

All this I Believe, Lord help my Unbelief!

THE

THE EXHORTATION TO Mr. *Thomas Fiſher.*

(*a*) YOU have deſir'd the Honourable *Office* and *Good Work* of a *Biſhop* in the Church of Chriſt. We have had a ſatisfactory Account of your paſt Converſation.

You have upon Examination before the Reverend Claſſis, been found (*b*) *not a Novice*, with Reſpect to the Knowledge of our moſt Holy Faith; and of thoſe Things which are ſubſervient thereunto.

You have been approv'd, as (*c*) *apt to teach*, both by us your Fellow-Labourers, and by thoſe who have here conſtantly ſat under your Miniſtry.

You have *made a good Profeſſion before many Witneſſes.*

You have, *as one accounted faithful*, been ſet apart to the ſacred Office you deſir'd, according to the Rule of the Holy Scriptures, by Faſting, Prayer, and (*d*) *Impoſition of the Hands of the Presbytery.*

I am now (in Obedience to the Order of my Brethren) to put you in Mind how you ought to *behave*

(*a*) 1 Tim. 3. 1. (*b*) 1 Tim. 3. 6. (*c*) 1 Tim. 3. 2. (*d*) 1 Tim. 4. 14.

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your ſelf in the Houſe of God; in Conſequence of the ſolemn Tranſaction paſt, and the ſolemn Vow you have made.

I cannot ſpeak better to you than in the Words, and according to the Scope of the Apoſtle *Paul*, in his Epiſtles to *Timothy* and *Titus*: So very ſuitable (in the main) notwithſtanding the peculiar Characters of *Paul* as an *Apoſtle*, and *them* as *Evangeliſts*; and ſo particularly neceſſary to be reviv'd amongſt us, who live in thoſe *later Days*, and *perillous* (*a*) *Times*, which he makes mention of; and by the Proſpect of which, he inforces much of the Advice he gives.

1. And *Firſt*, *Take* (*b*) *heed to your ſelf.*

I need not tell you how much the good of a People depends upon the Perſonal Conduct of their Miniſter.

1. Keep clear of this preſent evil World.

Your Calling obliges you to a diſentanglement, as much as may be, from the *Buſineſs* of it. (*c*) *No Man that warreth entangleth himſelf with the Affairs of this Life. He who ſtrives, is not crown'd, unleſs he ſtrive lawfully*; according to Rule and Law: diveſting himſelf of whatſoever might perplex and fetter him, or give advantage to his Adverſary.

Let not your Heart go out inordinately after its *Wealth*, for (*d*) *We brought nothing with us into the World, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. Having Food and Raiment, let us be therewith content. They who will be rich fall into Temptation and a Snare, and into many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which drown Men in Deſtruction and Perdition. The Love of Money is the Root of all Evil, which while ſome coveted after, they have erred from the Faith, and pierced themſelves through with many Sorrows. But thou, O Man of God, flee theſe Things.* Let the Example of *Demas* be a

(*a*) 2 Tim. 3. 1, &c. (*b*) 1 Tim. 4. 16. (*c*) 2 Tim. 2. 4, 5. (*d*) 1 Tim. 6. 7, &c.

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warning to you, *Who* (ſays the Apoſtle) (*a*) *hath forſaken me, having loved this preſent World.* (*b*) *Flee alſo youthful Luſts.* With the utmoſt Care avoid its Pollutions.

2. *Study above all Things to approve your ſelf to God*, and then you need not to be aſhamed, it is a light Thing to be judg'd of Man's Day.

If God do but ſay at laſt to you, *well done*, you'll have enough.

3. In Order hereunto, Let (*c*) *the Word of Chriſt dwell richly in you. Give* (*d*) *attendance to the reading of it, and meditate on thoſe Things you read. Give your ſelf wholly to them, that your Profiting may appear unto all. By them will the Man of God be made perfect, throughly furniſh'd unto all good Works.* By the Holy Scriptures will you be taught (and by thoſe of theſe Epiſtles in a particular Manner) that (*e*) *a Biſhop muſt be blameleſs as the Steward of God, vigilant in his Function, Sober, of good Behaviour, given to Hoſpitality, not Contentious, not Self-will'd, not riotous, a Lover of good Men, Juſt, Holy, Temperate.* (*f*) An Example of *Believers in Word, in Converſation*, in extenſive *Charity, in Zeal, Faith and Purity.*

By the Word of Chriſt you will be taught to (*g*) *follow Righteouſneſs, Faith, Charity, Peace with them who call on the Lord out of a pure Heart.*

In ſhort, *ſo* take heed to your ſelf, that no *Man* may have occaſion *to deſpiſe your Youth.* (*h*)

2. With Reſpect to your Family. (1.) A neceſſary Care muſt be taken for the Subſiſtence of thoſe who compoſe it, (*i*) *If any one provide not for thoſe of his own Houſe, he has acted contrary to the Faith he profeſſes; he is worſe than an Infidel.* (2.) It muſt be

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(*a*) 2 Tim. 4. 10. (*b*) 2 Tim. 2. 22. (*c*) Col. 3. 16. (*d*) 1 Tim. 4. 13, 15. (*e*) 1 Tim. 3. 2. Tit. 1. 6, 7. (*f*) 1 Tim. 4. 12. (*g*) 2 Tim. 2. 22. (*h*) 1 Tim. 4. 12. Tit. 2. 15. (*i*) 1 Tim. 5. 8.

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rul'd well, for (*a*) *if a Man know not how to rule well in his own Houſe, how ſhall he be able to take Care in the Church of God?*

The Houſe of the *Man of God*, is under ſpecial Obligation to be a little *Bethel*, an *Houſe of God*.

3. As to others.

Speak Evil of no Man. (*b*) *Shew all Meekneſs unto all Men.* (*c*) *For all Men, Prayers, Supplications, Interceſſions, Givings of Thanks, muſt be made by you. For God will have all Men to be ſaved, and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth.* You muſt pray for Magiſtrates in particular, *for Kings, and all in Authority*, and that they may be ſo influenc'd by God, that thoſe who would lead their *Lives in Godlineſs and Honeſty* may meet with no Diſturbance, but may *lead them in Quietneſs and Peace.*

With Reſpect to them likewiſe, you are to put thoſe you are ſet over in Mind, that they *be ſubject and* (*d*) *obedient to them.* The Miniſters of the Goſpel of Peace, and the Prince of Peace, muſt not be Trumpeters of Sedition, and Ring-leaders of Tumult.

Particularly, as to the People committed to your Charge, the Directions of the Apoſtle are very large and full.

(1.) Should this Place be ſo unhappy, as to produce Inſtances of thoſe foretold by him in theſe later Times, (*e*) *departing from the Faith, and giving heed to ſeducing Spirits.* (1.) *They* (*f*) *who oppoſe themſelves* muſt be *inſtructed with Meekneſs, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the Acknowledgment of the Truth, and that they may recover themſelves out of the Snare of the Devil.* (2.) *But if after the firſt and ſecond Admonition they ſtill perſiſt, they muſt be rejected.* Thus he himſelf was forc'd to deal with *Hymeneus* and *A-*

(*a*) 1 Tim. 3. 4, 5. (*b*) Tit. 3. 2. (*c*) 1 Tim. 2. 1, &c. (*d*) Tit. 3. 1. (*e*) 1 Tim. 4. 1, 2. (*f*) 2 Tim. 2. 25.

lexander, whom he deliver'd to Satan, that they might learn not to blaſpheme (*a*). But I hope better Things, concerning this Congregation, Things which belong to Truth and Peace.

(2.) Setting aſide therefore ſo uncomfortable a Suppoſition, as Chriſt hath appointed you the Shepherd of this his Flock, let the Care you take of it be ſuch, that you may appear with Boldneſs before the *chief Shepherd*, when he comes.

The Apoſtle tells you, what *muſt not*, and then what *muſt* be their Entertainment.

1. It muſt not be (*b*) *vain Janglings*, and *Bablings*, *Jewiſh*, *or old Wives Fables*, or any Thing equivalent thereunto, *Oppoſitions of Science falſly ſo call'd*, *fooliſh and unlearned Queſtions* (how learned ſoever the Vexers of them may eſteem them). It muſt not be *Strife of Words*, (as abundance of our preſent Controverſies really are) it muſt *not be the Commandments and Inventions of Men*. For all theſe *turn from the Faith, and increaſe unto more Ungodlineſs, and eat the Vitals of Religion as a Canker*.

2. But they muſt be ſupply'd with what tends to (*c*) *Godly edifying*, with what anſwers the Deſign of the Ordinance of Preaching, with (*d*) *wholeſome Words*, even the *Words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*.

There is no room for going to Trifles, when there are ſuch a Multitude of great and glorious Themes before you. The whole Scripture lies open to you. Theſe Epiſtles furniſh you with not a few. Here is *God manifeſt in the Fleſh*, (*e*) *juſtify'd in the Spirit, ſeen of Angels, preach'd unto the Gentiles, believ'd on in the World, receiv'd up into Glory*. Here is the Doctrine of *Free Grace* (*f*) moſt brightly held forth. *God has ſav'd us and call'd us with an Holy Calling, not accord-*

(*a*) 1 Tim. 1. 20. (*b*) 1 Tim. 1. 6. —4. 7. —6. 4, 5, 6, 20. Tit. 1. 14, 15. —2. 9. (*c*) 1 Tim. 1. 4. (*d*) 1 Tim. 6. 3. (*e*) 1 Tim. 3. 16. (*f*) 2 Tim. 1. 9.

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ing to our Works, but according to his own Purpoſe and Grace, which was given us in Chriſt Jeſus before the World began, but is now made manifeſt by the appearing of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, who hath aboliſh'd Death, and hath brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Goſpel. (a) *Not by Works of Righteouſneſs which we have done, but according to his Mercy he ſaved us, by the waſhing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt.*

In this Senſe too, (b) *Be ſtrong in the Grace which is in Chriſt Jeſus.* Still remembring, (c) *That the Law is good, if a Man uſe it lawfully*, that (d) the *Myſtery of Faith and a pure Conſcience are to be held together.* That that Doctrine can never be the Doctrine of Chriſt, which is not a (e) *Doctrine according to Godlineſs*, that the (f) *Grace of God which has appear'd to all Men, teaches them to deny Ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and to live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent evil World.*

The Apoſtle has ſeveral Sayings in theſe Epiſtles, which he marks as *faithful Sayings.* I ſhall mention two of them under this Head. The one; (g) *Godlineſs is profitable unto all Things, having Promiſe of the Life which now is, and of that which is to come. This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation.* The other; (h) *This is a faithful Saying, and theſe Things I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they which have believ'd in God, might be careful to maintain good Works.*

As to the manner of your Preaching, you are told that *the Word of Truth muſt be rightly divided.* Perſons muſt be addreſs'd to, particularly, as there is Occaſion.

Inſtructions are laid before you by St. *Paul*, how to direct Old and Young, Husbands and Wives, Maſters and Servants, *&c.*

(a) Tit. 3. 5. (b) 2 Tim. 2. 1. (c) 1 Tim. 1. 8. (d) 1 Tim. 3. 9. (e) 1 Tim. 6. 3. (f) Tit. 2. 11. (g) 1 Tim. 4. 9. (h) Tit. 3. 8.

The greateſt are not to be truckled to, (*a*) *Charge them that are rich in this World, that they be not high-minded.* (*b*) *Theſe Things ſpeak, exhort, and rebuke with all Authority.* And once more, (*c*) *Theſe Things command and teach.*

Though at the ſame Time due Conſideration is to be had of Perſons, in the manner of your Application to them, as he ſhews in the Inſtances of the (*d*) *Elder and Younger,*

(*e*) In ſhort, *Preach the Word, be inſtant in ſo doing, in Seaſon, and out of Seaſon, in Publick or Private, by Night or Day, during Sun-ſhine, or during Storm, confute, rebuke, exhort, and do it with all Patience, and variety of Methods.*

I make no Queſtion (Sir) but you have as our Lord expreſſes it, ſat down, and counted the Coſt before hand; and therefore what I am going to add, will not diſhearten but quicken you, when I tell you, that you have need of *Courage.* (*f*) *All who will live Godly in Chriſt Jeſus, muſt look for Perſecution of one kind or other.* The Life of every Chriſtian is a Warfare; the Life of the faithful Chriſtian Miniſter is more eſpecially ſo. It is a (*g*) *good Warfare,* but a *Warfare* it is. At ſome Seaſons the Toils and Hazards are greater than ordinary, and I wiſh with all my Heart I could tell you, that Things have an encouraging Aſpect on the Intereſt of Religion now. Be that as it will: The Lord God Omnipotent reigns.

Let me exhort you, to (*h*) *endure whatever hardſhip you are call'd to as a good Soldier of Chriſt.* (*i*) *Watch in all Things, endure Afflictions, make full Proof of your Miniſtry.* (*k*) *Fight the good Fight of Faith, lay hold on Eternal Life, whereunto alſo you are call'd. Let no*

(*a*) 1 Tim. 6. 17. (*b*) Tit. 2. 15. (*c*) 1 Tim. 3. 11. (*d*) 1 Tim. 5. 1. (*e*) 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. (*f*) 2 Tim. 2. 12. (*g*) 1 Tim. 1. 18. (*h*) 2 Tim. 2. 3. (*i*) 2 Tim. 4. 5. (*k*) 1 Tim. 6. 12.

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Man take your Crown, a Crown (*a*) *there is which Christ the righteous Judge will give to those who hold out to the End.* Come what will, (*b*) *Be not asham'd of the Testimony of our Lord*, for you know in (*c*) *whom it is that you believe*, you know, that (*d*) *if you suffer with him, you shall reign with him.*

Sir, I heartily wish you good Success in your Ministerial Labours. *Success* is what (indeed) I cannot promise you *certainly*; but *this* I can, that if you are found Faithful, you shall not *lose your Reward*, though Israel *be not gather'd.*

Let not the Blood of Souls be found on you.

I'll conclude with those awful Words in 1 *Tim.* 6. 13, &c. *I give thee Charge in the sight of God, who quickneth all Things, and before Christ Jesus, who before* Pontius Pilate *witnessed a good Confession, that thou keep this Commandment without Spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his Times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; who only hath Immortality, dwelling in the Light which no Man can approach unto, whom no Man hath seen, nor can see:*

To whom be Honour and Power Everlasting! Amen.

(*a*) 2 Tim. 4. 7. (*b*) 2 Tim. 1. 8. (*c*) 2 Tim. 1. 12. (*d*) 2 Tim. 2. 11.

FINIS.

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7. Two Sermons preach'd at the opening of a New Erected Chappel in St. *Edmunds Bury*, Dec. 30, 1711. on *Exod.* 40. 34.

8. A Sermon Preach'd at the Ordination of Mr. *Tho. Fiſher*, at *Caſtle Hedingham* in the County of *Eſſex*, June 23. 1713. on 1 *Theſſ.* 2. 4.